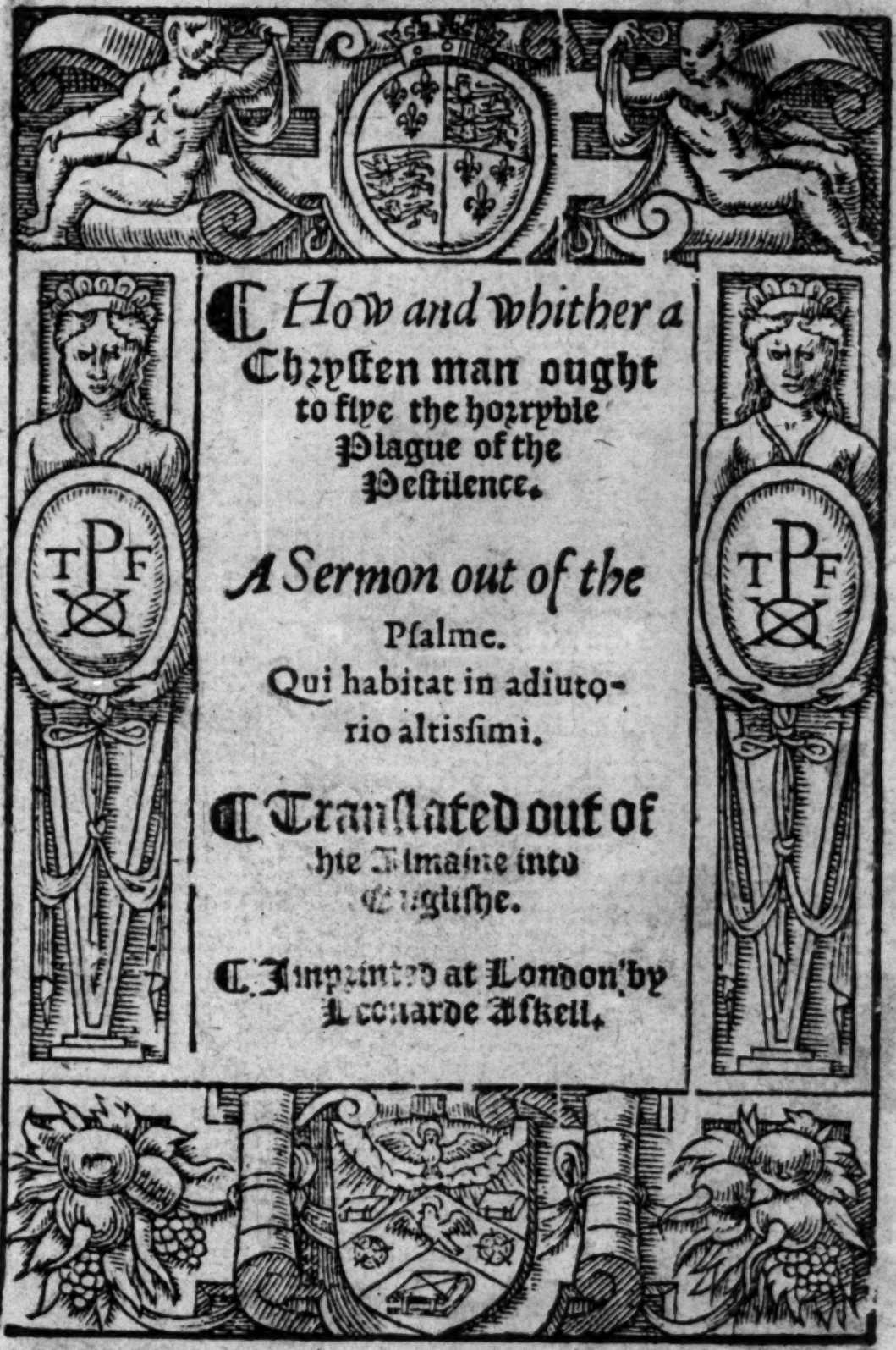

¶ How and whither a Chrysten man ought to flye the horryble Plague of the Pestilence.

A Sermon out of the Psalme.

Qui habitat in adiutorio altissimi.

¶ Translated out of hie Almaine into Englishe.

¶ Imprinted at London by Leonarde Askell.

¶ A Sermon oute of the Pſalme, *Qui habitat &c.* how and vnto what place a Chriſten man ought to flye the horrible plage of the Peſtilence.

FOr as muche as Almightye God, doth viſet, hantle and punyſhe the country and region wyth the horrible and fearfull plage of the Peſtilence and many folkes (after an vnmanerly faſhion) are ſo afraid therof-that there be harde and ſene of them al manner of vncuſtomable wooꝛdes and wooꝛkes, which become not well a Chriſten man: And ſeing that all the dedes of charity which one chriſten man is bound to ſhew vnto another (no leſſe then vnto Chriſt him ſelfe) are perelouſly omytted, wherby then riſeth al maner of ſlaunder to the weake, & miſrepoꝛt vnto the holy goſpel: I thought it pꝛofitable & neceſſary to beſtow vpon your charitie in this caſe a ſhoꝛt inſtruction and comfoꝛt out of the holy ſcripture, to the intent that the ignoꝛant may be taught, the weake ſtrengthed, and euerye one counſelled after his callyng, to ſerue his neighbour.

And I will take foꝛ me the. xci. Pſalme,

which soundeth after this maner.

Who so sytteth vnder the defence of the highest, and abydeth vnder the shadowe of the almightye.

He sayeth vnto the LORDE: My hope, and my stronge holde: my God on whom I trust.

For he delyuereth me from the snare of the hunter, & from the noysome pestilence.

He shall couer thee with his fethers, and thy truste shalbe vnder hys wynges: his truth is spere and shyelde.

So that thou nedest not to feare for the horribleneße of the nyght, for the arrowes that flye by daye tyme.

For the pestilence that commeth preuelye in the darke: for the sycknesse that destroyeth in the noone daye.

Though a thousande fall at thy syde

ſyde, and ten thouſand at thy ryght hand, yet ſhall it not come nye thee.

Yea wyth thyne eyes ſhalte thou ſee thy deſyre, and behold, howe the vngodly ſhalbe rewarded.

But afore we come to the vnderſtanding of theſe comfortable wordes, your charitye ſhal fyrſt knowe that it is not my meanyng to forbyd or inhibite any man to flye or to vſe phiſycke, or to auoide daungerous and ſicke places in theſe feareful ayres, ſo farre as a man doth not therin againſte the beliefe, nor gods commanndement, nor againſt his calling, nor againſt the loue of hys neighbour. For though ſome will ſay: Such plague toucheth no man, but thoſe that be ordeined of god thereunto, like as there be certain enſamples therof found in the holy ſcripture: Namely, how the Ezech. 9. & Apo. vii. there was ſent an Aungell which afore hand marked the vertuous and elect, or euer it was charged and commaunded the ſeconde angel to ſmite (with peſtilēces or other plages) thoſe that were not mar

ked. Neuertheles, against that it might be saide: Good sir, thoughe it went so at suche a time in such places, who maketh vs sure yet nowe that it shall therefore chaunce so in al other deathes of the cõtry? Therfore wil I now at this time let all such thinges continue in their worthynesse and fre, lyke as al other natural thinges, which be subiect and committed vnto our reason to rule. But as for the christen, which (by reason of office, or for pouertie sake, or for other reasonable causes) can not, or be not mindyd to flye, I wyll heare withall shewe theym their best and highest comforte that they haue.

In lyke maner, I wyll not entre agaynste theim, that speake naturallye therof, and saye: Suche plage commeth out of the influance of the starres, out of the worckynge of the Cometes, out of the vnseasonable wether and altiryng of the ayre, oute of the Southe wyndes, oute of stinking waters, or out of foule mistes of the grõud: For such wisdome as theirs wyll we leaue vnto them vndispised, and not feyght there agaynst: (But as Christen men) we wyll hold vs vnto the word of God, the same wyll wee suffre to be

our moſt hye wyſedome, & geue credence vnto it, and folow it: and ſo ſhal we fynd much better and ſurer inſtructiõ: Namelye, that this horrible plague of the peſtilence commeth out of Goddes wrath, becauſe of the diſpiſing and traunſgreſſing of his godly cõmaundementes. For thus ſayeth the holye Prophete Moyſes in the fyft booke, the.xxviii. Chapiter.

Yf thou wylte not hearken vnto the voyce of the LORDE thy God to obſerue and kepe al his commaundementes and ordynaunces which I commaunde thee, then ſhal all theſe curſes come vpon thee. &c. And it foloweth: the LORD ſhall cauſe the Peſtilence to endure longe with thee: the LORD ſhall ſmite thee with ſwellyng, feuer heat, burnynge, blaſtynge, drouth. &c. and ſhal perſecute thee tyll he vtterly deſtroy thee, and bringe thee to naught.

And certaynly thys is the playne truth & the very Original of theſe plages. No man ought to doubt theron. For though

the forsaid naturall causes do somwhat also therto, yet it is sure and vndouted, that the same causes be sent and sterred vp out of Gods wrath for our synne and vnthankfulnesse. And truely that it is euen so, the holye scripture declareth, not wyth bare wordes onely, but sheweth it also wyth notable ensamples. For in the fourth boke of Moses the fourtenth chapter, whan all the spyes (except Josua and Caleb) spake euill of the land of promise, and made the people vnpacient and vprourishe, so that they chose them a Captaine, and thought to go againe into Egipte, and to stone Moises and Aaron, (which commaunded them the contrary) we reade thus: Then appeared the glory of the Lord, and spake vnto Moses: How lõg doth this people blaspheme me? And how long will they not beleue me, for al the tokens that I haue done vpon them: therefore wil I smite and destroye them with pestilence, and make of thee a greater nacion then this.

Likewise also when Dauid caused the people to be numbred against gods commaundement, he displeased the Lord god horribly therwith. Therfore layed he the punishment vppon him, so that he was

faine

faine to chose himself whether he had rather haue seuen yeares dearth, or three monethes mischaunce in battaile, or three dayes pestilence in the lande. And whan he chose the pestilence, there died in three dayes seuentye thousande menne, as it is written in the last chapter of the. ii. boke of Samuel.

Seing then that out of the word of god we knowe the very cause of this horrible plage. Namely, that it is the defaute of our sinnes, as vnbeliefe, disobedience and vnthankfulnes. Therfore before al thinges, it shalbe necessraye, that we refaine from the same, repent and amend our lyues. If we wil els be preserued and deliuered from this horrible plage. For yt god punish vs because of sinne, it is good to consider that we must first knowledge & eschue our sinnes, in case that he shall withdraw and take away his wrath and punishment from vs. For if we continue in oure euill sinfull and culpable lyfe, certainlye he shall not ceasse wyth the punnyshement, but go foorth more and more, till he geue and recompence accordinge to oure workes. But yf we knowledge our synne, refraine from it, repent

and

and are grace, then shall he also take away his wrath. And this horrible wrath (with other heauye burthens, as warre, and dearth that lye vpon our necke) shall be mercifully take away from vs again. As holy Paule sayeth. i. Cor. xi. If we iudged our selues, we should not be iudged: But whan we are iudged, we be chastened of the Lorde, that we shoulde not be damned wyth the worlde.

And out of all this may your charitye well perceaue, howe vnwyselye and vnchristenlye they doe, that oute of inordinate feare, of this plague leaue their calling and office, maliciously withdrawing the loue, helpe, and faithfulnesse, which they (out of Gods commaundement) are bounde to shewe vnto their neighbours, and so do sinne greuously against the cõmaundement of God. For certainly they doe but stirre vp the wrath of God more earnestly against thẽselues, that he may the soner take hold vpon them and pluck them away with this plague. For men maye heare on euery syde, that some doe thone and fly not only the sicke, but also the whole: Yea (that yet more foolyshe is) euen the Platters and Candelstyckes whyche come oute of straunge houses,

as

as though death dyd ſurely ſtick therein. And (out of ſuch fond childiſh feare) it cõmeth, that not only ſome ſicke folkes be ſuffred to dye away without all keping, helpe and comforte, but the women alſo greate wyth childe be forſaken in their nede, or els cometh there vtterly no man vnto them: Yea a man may heare alſo, that the children forſake their Fathers and mothers, and one houſholde bodye kepeth himſelfe away from another, and ſheweth no loue vnto him: Which neuertheles he woldo be glad to ſe ſhewed vnto himſelfe, if he lay in lyke neceſſitye.

Howbeit I ſuppoſe ther come not many ſuch chaunces to paſſe, neuertheles I muſt ſpeak therof that it be done nomore from henceforth. For certainely it is vnwiſely & vnchriſtenly handled: & we nede not think that the ſame is the way to eſcape this plague, but rather an occaſion that it raigneth the more mightely ouer vs. For ſeing it is ſure (as ye haue harde afore) that ſuch plage is ſent for puniſhment of our ſinnes, & Chriſt hath geuen vs a newe Commaundement that we ſhoulde loue one another (as he hath loued vs) it followeth that the farther wee departe frome the loue of oure

neighbour

neighboure, the more we lade synne vpō vs, & deserue this plague but the more. Agayn the more diligently that we take hede vnto the loue of our neighbour, the surer shall we be from thys plague: No man nedeth to doute therof.

But here withall wyll I also counsell or compel no man, to any vnnedeful daū ger, (that he is not bounde vnto by hys callinge nor by loue) but onelye warne those whiche for feare leaue that whiche they are bound to do before God: To the intent that for suche naked feares sake, they do not transgresse nor omytte the commaundement of God, and hope by sinne to escape this plague, which neuer theless commeth because of synne. For that were a foolysh vnaduysed counsell, yf one wold go about to escape the wrath of God by transgression, and by synne to auoyde the punishment of synne.

Besydes thys, doth experience shewe also that they whiche be so sore afrayed, do commenly miscary. Againe, they that wayte vpon their offices and serue their neighbours, be deliuered: As it is well sene in the ministers of the churche and other mo, that shone not the sycke, but must viset and comfort them with Gods

worde

woꝛd, & pꝛouide foꝛ them with ỹ holy ſa-
cramẽt: Foꝛ we ſee no where, that they
therfoꝛe muſt alſo be ſoone ſicke & muſte
dye. Yea how muſt the higher powers of
the woꝛlde do, which (be reaſon of theyꝛ
callinge, and foꝛ the common pꝛofyt and
regimentes ſake) abyde alſo in the ieoper-
dy, & muſt mynifter becauſe of loue: Spe-
cially the chiefeſt, on one whereof there
lyeth moꝛe, then on a thouſand of other:
And yet doth God commonlye pꝛeſerue
them alſo that they be deliuered, left ſtil
on lyue and dy in a good quyete age.

Therefoꝛe certaynlye ſuch inoꝛdinate
feare and flying agaynſt Gods commaũ-
dement is nothing els, but a declarynge
of a great and ſoꝛe vnbeliefe, that menne
do not beleue and truſte in God, that he
can and wyll deliuer. And thus is verifi-
ed the ſaying: The vngodly haue no
peace. Eſa. lvii. Foꝛ if we wyll feare &
flye where no perill is, whan wyll we
then beſtow our lyues foꝛ our neighboꝛs
as Chꝛiſt hath done foꝛ vs: and we alſo
be bounde to do likewiſe. i. Io. iii.

Who ſo nowe deſyꝛeth to eſcape the
wꝛath of God and this hoꝛrible plague,
let him not aſke his owne reaſon how he
ſhall do, but beleue and folow the woꝛde

of

of god: which teacheth him not to fly euil ayre & infecte places (which he may well do: neuertheles he remayneth yet vncertain whether it helpeth or no) but it teacheth him to leaue of from sinne, as from the very original cause of this plage and punishment, & (by true repentaunce & amendement of liuing) to walke again in the right way. For that is the only sure and wholsome flying in this daungerous tyme, whereby a man may escape thys plague.

But whyther a man ought to flye, thereof wyll we heare the holy ghost by the prophete in this psalme. He knoweth it much better then we can thinke, and sayeth after this maner.

Who so sitteth vnder the defence of the hyghest, and abydeth vnder the shadowe of the almyghtye. He sayeth vnto the LORD: My hope, and my stronge holde: My God on whom I hope. For he delyuereth me from the snare of the hunter, & from the noysome pestilence.

These wordes (my moste dearely beloued) shal ye take to hart, and mark them

well

well with all diligence: For they be not the wordes of men which can lie and deceaue. Howbeit though they were mens wordes, & some old wyse man spake them (or some well learned phesician) ye wold not yet despyse theym, but receaue and kepe them. But nowe be they the verye wordes of the hie maiestye of god, which the holy ghost speaketh by the mouth of the prophete. And they teach vs whither we ought to fly for this plague, that we may be safe. And certaynly they must nedes be the verye truth: For heauen and earth must passe, but my wordes shal not passe, sayeth the lorde.

But that ye maye vnderstande them right & wel, ye shal remember that it is the vse of the holy scripture (specially in the psalmes) to declare one meanynge with two manner of saynges, as ye haue oft times hard. For so doth the prophete here and saith.

Who so sitteth vnder the defence of the hyghest, and abydeth vnder the shadowe of the almyghtye. For to sytte vnder the defence of the highest, is euen as muche to saye, as to abyde vnder the shaddowe of the almyghtye. And wyth these wordes meaneth

the holy prophete nothing els, but: who so putteh his truste in God with a righte sure Christen belief, and geueth himselfe ouer into his protection and defence, (for suche people doth God receaue to grace) theym holdeth he for his owne deare childzen (& euen so they be) and geueth theym his holy spirite, which worketh in theym very saluation and godly workes.

Therfore remayneth he also vpon them, & all things muste serue for their wealth, as Paule sayeth Rom. viii. Such protection also and defence of God, is set forth vnto vs euerye where in the scripture, as an ouershadowinge and coueringe with winges. For like as the two Cherubins spred out their wynges ouer the Arke. Exod. xxxvii. Euen so doth God spreade ont the winges of his protection ouer his elect. Therfore sayth Moses. Deute. xxxii. Like as an Aegle stirreth vp his nest, and flyeth ouer his yong ones: so spred he out his fethers, and bare his people vpon his winges. After this maner spake the holy angel Gabriell also vnto the most blessed and pure virgin Mary, whan she shonlde be the mother of God: The holye ghost shall come vpon thee, and the power of the hyghest shal ouershadow thee. Luc. i.

In

In lyke maner ſpake chriſt alſo vnto Ieruſalem: Howe oft wolde I haue gathered thy children together, as an henne gathereth her chekens vnder her wings and ye wold not: Mat.xxiii. For though a true beleuing man be in dede the temple of god, & god dwelleth in hym yet vſeth the ſcripture oft to ſpeake therof, as though he did flye aboue vs (in aſmuche as he doth ouer ſhadow, couer & defed vs) & that becauſe the heauen & the heauen of all heauens (as Salomon ſayeth) can not comprehend nor contain him. iii. Re. iii. But though he dwelleth in vs, yet flyeth he wyde, hye and lowe, not onely on the outſyde of vs, but alſo on the outſyde and ouer all creatures. And ſo in all theſe woordes there is nothynge els ſayde: but whoſoeuer is a right beleuing Chriſtian.

Marke nowe then that he ſayeth not: Who ſo is wiſe, ſtronge, riche, whole, or well frended. Neyther ſayeth he alſo: who ſo kepeth hym ſelfe thence, or flyeth thether, holdeth himſelfe well, or vſeth good phiſicke, but who ſo putteth his truſt in God. Not that the forſayde good thinges be euil, or may not be had or vſed with profit: But that they where

sayth is not) maye euen assoone do harme as good, are in no wise able to delyuer from the wrath of God. But what doeth the beleuer? He sayeth vnto the Lorde: my hope. But this do not the vngodlye and vnbeleuers, but set their hope in the forsaid points, put their trust in them, & boast theron, & so cõmit spiritual whoredome therwith, and make Idols therof. But to god do they not lift vp their eies, nother thinke they vppon him, nor feare him. And whan he commeth then with his wrath, and ouer taketh them with a plage so that of necessity they must nedes thinke vpon him, then feare they, and be afrayed of him, flye away and know not where to abyde: Then vanysheth away their hope and boastinge, whiche they (in tyme of prosperitye) had vnto the creatures. And so commeth it to passe, that their wisedome hath bene playne folishnesse: their strength, their owne misfortune: their riches, their owne distruction: their health, their owne harme: their frendes, their owne ypocrytes and traitours. And al that which they trusted vnto, can not helpe them. Whan they wold hide themselues on the backeside therof, it is euen as muche as whan one hydeth

hym behynde a ladder. And what they woulde ſeeke helpe thereby, it is euen lyke as a wolfe ſhoulde defende a ſheepe or a gooſe.

But thus goeth it not with the beleuer: for who ſo putteth hys truſt in the Lorde, ſhall not be confounded. Therfore ſaith he not only that ỹ lorde is his hope, but alſo his ſtronge holde, which he may flye vnto, in the whiche he may ſhut hym ſelf cloſe, and be deliuered therin. As Salomon ſayeth in the.xviii. Chapter of the prouerbes: The name of the Lorde is a ſtronge caſtell, the righteous flyeth vnto it, and ſhalbe defended. For the vnbeleuers haue their hope euē in their goodes, butte in neceſſitie they fynde no refuge, as the faythfull hathe a ſtronge holde and hyghe Caſtell in GOD the Lorde.

And thoughe the vnbeleuers haue their whole wyll all theyr lyfe longe, yet hath it an euyll ende, as it had wyth the ryche manne, whyche was buryed in the hell: Luce.xvi. For whoe ſoo beleueth not, ſhalbe dampned. Agayne though the faythfull bee plagued and perſecuted all hys lyfe longe, ſo that he can not ſee howe he may bedeliuered, yet hath he this

comforte, that the Lord is his God: that is, that he can helpe and delyuer him as an almighty Lorde, yea after suche a fashion and way, as neither he him self nor any mans reason can thinke or deuise. And thoughe he do it not, yet doeth not the faithful dispaire: but letteth the Lord be his God, on whom he hopeth: that is, at whose hande he looketh for al good in the lyfe for to come and euerlasting. For hope seeth and looketh on that which is to come, which as yet is hid. As Pauls saith Roma, the viii. Chapter. Hope that is sene, is no hope: for howe can a man hope that which is sene. But if we hope that which we see not, we looke for it by pacience.

And so is this meaninge: The vnbeleuers haue their hope in the creatures, & are afrayd of God. The faithful hath his hope to god, & is lord ouer the creatures. The vnbeleuers myscarye, & by the creatures finde they no helpe in neede. The faithfull miscarye not, but God is vnto them a strong hold. The vnbeleuers may well haue their willes as longe as they liue, but at ỳ last (thorow their dispaire) there folowth euerlastinge damnation. The faithfull maye their life longe haue dis-

diſquietnes and temptacion, but at the laſt (thorow their hope) there foloweth euerlaſting life.

Suche hope ſhould they haue, and they haue it in dede, that though they muſt lie vnder as longe as they liue, yet after death they ſhall inherite euerlaſting life.

But certeinly it commeth not to paſſe, that they muſt alway lye vnder: For god is faithfull, and ſuffereth not hys to bee tempted aboue their ſtrength, but maketh the temptacion ſo to haue an ende, that we maye beare it. i. Cor. x. Therefore ſayeth the Prophete moreouer:

For he deliuereth me from the ſnare of the hunter, and from the noiſome peſtilence.

And in theſe wordes, doth he ſhortly ſhew vnto vs, that almighty God can and wil delyuer hys owne from all miſfortune yet euen in this life. For all the myſchaunces that we be troubled wythall in this temporall lyfe, are of two ſortes: Some come oute of the wicked deuiſe of the deuil, and of men, as ſhame and perſecution: Some plainlye of nature and oute of the ordynaunce of God, as tempeſt and peſtylence. The faythfull

nowe beleueth and maketh his boaste, that these mischaunces can not bee soo great and myghtye, but God shall delyuer hym there from.

And it is a goodly natural symilitude, that he lykeneth the euyll wicked deuice of the vngodly agaynst the faithfull, to a nette or snare of the hunter. For lyke as an hunter proueth the kynde and nature of euery wylde beast, commeth priuely after him, seketh out the course and habitacion therof, and afterwarde setteth the nette, that he maye dryue it therin: Euenso do the vngodly also vnto the ryghteous: Fyrst, they looke howe they be mynded. Yf anye one be free of language, then sette they hym on fyre, that he may speak somwhat sharpely, as saint Steuen did. Actu. the. vii. Chapter. Yf he be gentle and frendlye, then ymagen they some folyshe thing vpon hym, & flatter away his harte from him as Dalila did vnto Samson. Yf he seke the saluacion of the people, then sclaunder they him, as the Iewes blasphemed Chryst to be a wynesupper and a companyon of publicans. Yf he be simple, then lye they vppon hym behynde hys backe, or euer hee bee ware thereof: Then follows they

they vpon hym, cry, lye, and complayne, that the vertuous Chriſten man woteth not what poynt to be at, or howe he hath deſerued it. Neuertheleſſe they thynke the hell is ſoo caſte, that at the laſte it muſte rynge as they wyll, but it fayleth them.

For the Lorde on whom we beleue, which is our hope, refuge and God, can not onely preſerue vs from theyr ſnares that we fall not therein, but alſo whan we fall into theym, and they thinke we be their captyues, he can and wyll delyuer vs yet thereout. In lyke maner doth God the Lorde preſerue his faythful, not onely from the noyſome ſickeneſſe of the peſtilence, but alſo whan they bee taken therewith and infecte already he deliuereth them from it and maketh them whole againe. But howe that cometh to paſſe, and howe we ſhall vnderſtand it, it ſhall folowe hereafter more clerely.

Thys is nowe well to be marked alſo, that the Peſtilence is a noyſome ſyckeneſſe, not becauſe it bryngeth death (for that dooe all other mortall ſickeneſſes lykewyſe, and death is no loſſe vnto the faythfull, but aduauntage, as Paule ſayeth, Phylip. the fyrſte Chapiter) but

because that it taketh awaye the people very sodenlye vnloked for and vnwares: Whereoute then there foloweth, stryfe, lawyng or busynes amonge sinners and of the comune wealth, as euerye man by him selfe can lightly perceiue and vnderstande. Therefore is it also an horrible punishment ouer the sinne of the world, whiche concerneth both theym that dye, and them that are left alyue, as hereafter it shall folowe.

Where as is now such a fayth as geueth credence vnto God, he shal preserue him from all wycked ymaginacions of men, likewise from all noysome sycknesses. And at the last shall he saue hym, that continueth not without fruite, but breaketh out with right loue and faythfulnesse toward his neighbour, and desireth also to bringe hym vnto that point, that he may beleue and be partaker of al suche goodes & benefites of God. Therefore doth the prophete turne his wordes nowe also vnto hys neighbour, and sayeth furthermore:

He shall couer thee with his fethers, and thyne hope shalbe vnder hys wynges. That is; yf thou also

wilt

wilt put thy truſt in him, thou ſhalt find it ſo likewiſe. For he ſheweth ſuche his benefites vnto all and euery one that put their truſt in him. As for the couering of his fethers and hope vnder his wynges, your charitye hath harde ynoughe afore what it is.

Now though all faithful loke for ſuch helpe at god, & it happeneth vnto them, yet is it not done without a ſpeciall battail of fayth. For ſuch helpe doth he promiſe vs in his holy worde, that we ſhuld beleue it. And if we beleue it, it happeneth vnto vs accordinge to oure fayth. Therfore ſayeth the prophete moreouer: hys truth is ſpere and ſhyeld. That is, his godlye promiſes, whiche are ſure and true, and neither lye nor deceaue: Thoſe be our weapens wherewyth we fyght, and ouercome all aduerſitye. But like as ſpere and ſhielde are not profytable vnto him that can not vſe theym, nor will: Euen ſo alſo do not the promyſes of God profyte hym, that can not fyght therwith, & wil not beleue theron. For that is the ryghte ſcyence in thys battayll whan myſfortune, aduerſity or temtacion commeth, that we loke about vs accordynge vnto Goddes worde:

Namelye

Namely what comforte and promyſſe he hath made vnto vs in ſuche a caſe, and wyth a ryghte beleefe to take holde of the ſame as of a ſhyelde, and to comfort and defende oure ſelues therewith ſo can there no myſchaunce do vs harme, as the holye Saynct Paule in the laſt chapter of hys Epyſtle to the Epheſians teacheth and ſayeth: Before all thynges take the ſhyelde of fayth wherewyth ye maye quenche all the fyrye dartes of the wycked.

Againſte the ſame (namelye agaynſte Sathan our heade enemy) is ſuch worde of God, euen the ryght ſpeare, wherwith we wounde and ouercome hym. For no bodely wapen hurteth and hindreth men ſo ſore, as the worde of god ſtoppeth and hindreth Sathã. If it be thruſt vnder his noſe againſt his venymous dealinge and temtacion. For if a ſeruaunt (that dealeth wrongouſly and vnthriftelye in hys maſters goodes & buſineſſes) be afrayed, vexed, and perſed thorow the hart, whan a ſimple manne ſayeth vnto him: Thou vnthrift why doſt thou ſo. That is not thy maſters wyll and meanynge, he dyd not ſo commaund thee. How much more goeth it thorowe Sathans hart, whan a

vertuous

bertuous Chryſtian manne holdeth the wooꝛde of GOD vnder hys eyes, and bꝛyngeth witneſſe ouer hym that he as a wycked creature handleth agaynſt his maker, and agaynſte hys choſen chyldꝛen: Therefoꝛe doeth holye Saynct Paule call Gods wooꝛde alſo the ſwearde of the ſpiryte: And the Looꝛde Chryſte defendeth himſelfe onelye with the ſame againſt all temtacions of Sathan in the wylderneſſe.

Nowe whan thou takeſt holde thus of Goddes pꝛomyſes thoꝛowe fayth, and beſett them foꝛ ſpeare and ſhielde to defend thy ſelfe, and to ſmyte Sathan, then out of the ſame it followeth as the pꝛophete ſayeth farther:

That thou nedeſt not to feare foꝛ the hoꝛribleneſſe of the nyght.

Foꝛ the arrowes that flye in the day tyme.

Foꝛ the peſtilence that commeth pꝛiuely in the darke.

Foꝛ the ſickeneſſe that deſtroyeth in the noone day.

Foꝛ theſe four aduerſities ſet foꝛward

and

and shorten the lyfe of the vnbeleuers: But the faithfull hath suche consolacion and promise, that he nedeth not to be afraide. First for the horriblenesse of the night. That is, for all maner of temptacion and deceate: that happen vnto men by night in the darkenesse. For this we al perceiue, that in the night & in the darknesse we are weaker minded, of more dispaire, and more afraid then in the light. The blonde runneth to oure hartes, and the heeres stande vpright, and all the body wareth cold for feare. Out of this cõmeth it then that we thinke we se, heare and perceaue somwhat, whiche in verye dede is not so, then goth their one astray, another leaseth his colour, the thirde falsicke, the fourth is become croked, the fift goeth out of his wyt. And so men thinke that the deuyll hath done it, where as it is yet a playne naturall worckynge of the erceadynge great feare, which wolde destroye a man euen by day tyme, if it were so greate. Howebeit true it is that the deuill causeth such feare, and printeth it in, that he may begyle and destroy vs by feare as by a naturall worckynge. Yet is it nothinge but a feare: for the prophete calleth it not an euyll or good spyte, but

playnely

plainly the horriblenes of the night. Neither is it any thinge els also but an horrour and feare, and contynueth an horrour and feare.

Therfore where a right belief is, there is no feare. Where no fearfulnes is, ther is also no horrour, nor fantaſie of ſpirites or deceitfulneſſe of the night, but plaine courage and boldnes. If any thyng els be ſene (as fire or light) they be but natural things, out of the heat of the ground, like as lightninges, draggons, fallynge ſtarres, and cometes be in the aire and in the heauen. But herewithall will not I ſpeake againſt the wonderfull viſions and tokens, whiche God ſendeth for a warnynge before great myſchaunces to come.

Secondarylye, is the faythfull ſure for the arrowes that flye in the day tyme. That is all maner of miſchaunces which ouertake a man openlye in the daye: and yet ſo ſodenly and vnwares, that he can not eſcape theym. As when a tyle falleth from the roofe of an houſe, whan a wicked beaſte doeth euyll, or whan an vngratious perſon doth hurt in body, name or good. For ſuch miſfortunes com for the mooſte parte ſo ſodeynelye, that a

man

man can not preuent theym, butte muſte lette theym hyt as with an arrowe, and afterwarde reſtore and heale the harme wyth greate trauayle and laboure. But nowe wyll God preſerue hys faythfull frome ſuche myſfortune, yf they haue hys promyſes before their eyes, beleue thereon, and order their lyues therafter.

Thyrdlye, a faythfull perſon needeth not alſo to bee afrayed for the peſtylence that ſleppeth in preuylye in the darke. This is verelye a comefortable promyſſe in this daungerous tyme, for the whyche we ſhoulde by ryghte putte our truſte in GOD and thanke hym therefore, for aſmuche as it is one of the mooſte perelous and horrible plagues, wherewyth he viſiteth and puniſheth the ſinne of the worlde. For it taketh holde of lyke vnwares, and plucketh a manne awaye in two or three dayes (or euer he can order hys buſynelle and houſe, and make hys Teſtament) crepeth in preuilye in the darke, ſoo that no man knoweth what it is, or whence it commeth, or whyther it goeth, therefore can no man kepe himſelf ſurelye frome it.

For if it were in meat or drynk, it might be eſchued: If it wer an euil taſt, it might

be

be expelled wyth a ſwete ſauoure: Yf it were an euyll winde, the chamber might with diligence bee made cloſe therefore: Yf it were a cloude or myſt it might be ſene, and auoyded: Yf it were a rayne, a man might couer him ſelfe for it. But nowe is it a ſecrete myſſortune that creepeth in preuilye, ſo that it can nother be ſene nor hard, nother ſmelled nor taſted, tyll it haue done the harme.

Therefore the more daungerous and noyſome that the plage is, the better and more excellente is the promyſe, that no manne ſhould haue cauſe to dyſpare. For howe myght GOD make vs a more excellent and fayrer promyſſe, then that he promyſeth to delyuer frome the peſtilencee vs that be his chyldren, and that wee neede notte to bee a frayed thereof, though a thouſand die of the ſame at our left ſide & ten thouſand at our right ſide. Yet ſhall it not reach vnto vs, yf wee do but beleue thys promyſſe, and lette it be oure ſpeare and ſhylde. For yf we ſo do, then ſhall ſuche poyſoned arowes eyther not hytte vs at all, or els not wounde vs to death.

Fourthly, God wyll alſo preſerue hys chyldren from the ſickneſs that deſtroyeth

in

in the noone daye: For the noone daye whan the Sonne is at the ſtrongeſt) is cauſe of much heate and feuerous ſyckeneſſe, ſpecially in thoſe countryes where the Sonne ryſeth hye and commeth nye ouer mens heades. For greate heate bryngeth muche ſweate, conſumeth and altereth the bloude cauſeth inordinate drynkynge, and maketh that the people are gladde to coole theym ſelues agayne folyſhlie: Wherout then ariſe al maner of perilous diſeaſes, whiche be not very vnlike the ſyckneſſe of the peſtilence.

Nowe whether it be feare of the night or arrowe of the day, whether it be peſtilence or ſickneſſe, that commeth by the euyll Southwynde, or what plague it will that lyeth vpon the worlde becauſe of theyr ſynnes, God the Lord wyll preſerue his faythfull therefrom, or delyuer them from it: and that ſhal come to paſſe ſo certaynelye and ſo wonderfullye, that (as the Prophete ſayeth) though a thouſand fall at thy left ſide, and tenne thouſande at thy ryghte ſyde, yet ſhall it not touch thee. This is doutleſſe a louing, mercifull, comfortable, and fayre promes, where on our heart by reaſon ſhuld truſte, and chiefelye reioyce in the ſame:

For

For he that ſpeaketh it, is almyghty and true, therfore ſhoulde we by reaſon geue credence vnto hym. For wee canne doe God no greater dyſhonoure, then to dyſpayre in his holy worde. We ought therfore to be muche more afrayed of that inordinate feare thén of deathe it ſelfe: for death can not hurt vs, in aſmuche as (we thorow baptyme) are grafted and buried vnto lyke death with Chryſt. But fearefulneſſe (which is nothyng els but an vnbeliefe) may harme vs, and bryng vs into impryſonence. Wherefore my moeſt dearely beloued, take theſe promyſes to heart, ſtrengthe youre hearte, mynde, and vnderſtandynge therwith, and be not faynt harted. So ſhall ye proue by experience, that God is true, and faythfullye performeth that whiche he promyſeth.

And that ye maye the more eaſelye beleue it, I wyl declare it vnto your charite by a ſimilitude how it commeth to paſſe, and whence it ſpringeth, that a ryghte faithfull Chriſten man can be ſo ſafe and free from all theſe plagues: for it is good to vnderſtand, and comfortable to knowe.

Your charite ſeeth and proueth daylye by experience, howe myghtye and horrible a thynge the darkeneſſe of the nyghte

is. For when it falleth, it couereth all the whole worlde, darkeneth the coloure and fashion of all creatures, captiuateth all menne and beastes liuinge, that they muste be styll and reste, yea and maketh them faintharted and fearful and so of al thinges it is a mighty inuincible tiraunt whom no man may withstand. Neuertheleste it is not yet so mightye, that it can darken, ouerwhelme, and quench the leste light that is found in the worlde. For we see, that the darker the night is, the clearer do the starres shyne: Yea the leaste candle lyght that is lighted, withstandeth the whole nighte, and suffreth not onely the darkenesse not to couer or oppresse it, but geueth lighte euen in the middes of the darknes, & smiteth it backe a certaine space on euerye side: and thyther as it is borne, must darknes depart, and geue place vnto the light: all the power and fearefulneste thereof, can not helpe againste it.

And though a light be so weake, that it geueth not light farre about it, neither can smyte the darknesse abacke (as the sparke of an whote cole) yet can not the darkenes couer it, much leste to quenche it: but it geueth lighte it selfe alone. so

that

that it may be ſene a far of in the darkenes, and remayneth vnouercome of the ſame, though it can not helpe other thinges, nor geue lyght vnto them.

Yea (that yet more wonderful is) a rotten ſhyning pece of woode, which neuertheleſſe hath the fayntеſt lighte that can be found, remayneth inuincible of al the power of darknes: and the more it is compaſſed aboute with darkeneſſe, the clearer light it geueth, ſo litle can darkenes ouercome or holde downe any lyght: but it ruleth vanquiſheth and expelleth the darkeneſſe, whiche els ouerwhelmeth, ſnareth and putteth all thinges in feare.

Euen ſo likewyſe doth a well ſpringe alſo, for there maye we ſee, howe a little vaine of water breaketh out of the grоũd ſomewhere ſcace ſo greate as a finger. And whan it is cloſed in rounde aboute that the water may gather together, and muſt nedes be a dich or a pitte, yet ſpringeth it neuertheles. And though the water bè certayne hundreds weyght aboue the ſpringe, yet maye not it dryue the ſpringe backe but the ſpring dryueth the whole burthen of the water backe, and aboue it ſelfe, and ſprynketh ſtyll more and more, tyll the poole flowe ouer. And

yf the other water be foule and vnclean, it cã not myrt it self vnder the fresh clere water of the spynge, but it remayneth cleare tyll it come farther abroade from the firste heade thereof, as it maye all be proued by daylye experience.

Yf a naturall lyghte then be so mighty agaynst the darkenesse of the nyght, and an earthen well spinge so strong in stryuinge against all standinge waters, howe muche more doeth it then the true euerlasting and heauenly lyght, and the only inuinsible spinge of all lyfe, namely, God the Lorde oure maker and Sauyour.

That God is the true, euerlastinge and heauenly lyght, witnesseth Iohn the euangelist in the first Chapter, and sayeth: God was the worde, in hym was the lyfe, and the lyfe was the lighte of men. Likewise also in his Canonicall epistle in the firste Chapter: God is light, and in him is no darkenesse

In lyke maner, That he is the onelye inuincible spynge of all lyfe, wytnesseth the Prophete Ieremye in the seconde Chapter. For there sayth the lord: My people committeth a dubble synne, they forsake me the lyuynge spynge of

life,

lyke, and make them ſelues fayre welles, whiche neuertheles geue no water. And Dauyd ſayth in the.xxxv.Pſalme: With thee is the ſpring of lyfe, and in thy light ſe wee lyght.

Yf God the lord then be the true lyght, it foloweth that all they which put their truſt in hym, be as a brenning candel: for by fayth doth God dwell in our heartes, and we are the lyuyng temple of god, as Paule to the Corinthians doth wytneſſe more then once. Therefore ſayth Chryſt of his diſciples. Math.v. Ye are the lyght of the worlde. And of John the Baptyſt: He was a burnynge and ſhinynge lyght. John.v. Lykewyſe yf God be the euerlaſtynge and lyuynge fountayne, it foloweth, that the faithfull be euen flowyng ſprynges. Therefore ſayeth Chryſt alſo. John.vii. Who ſo beleueth on me as the ſcripture ſayth, out of his bodye ſhall flowe ſtreames of liuinge water: But this he ſayd of the ſpirit which they that beleue on hym ſhoulde receaue.

Lyke as the darkeneſſe of the nyghte nowe can hurte no earthlye or worldelye lyght, but muſt geue place and flye from the lyght: Euen ſo Sathan alſo whyche is a Prince of ſpirituall darkeneſſe, can

do no harme to a true ryghte beleuynge Chriſten manne, but muſt feare and flye from him: For God whiche is the euerlaſtynge lyght, dwelleth & ſhyneth in his hart, and dryueth and expelleth far from hym all the workes of darkeneſſe. And lyke as no heape of water can dryue back any fountayne of the grounde, and hynder the quicke ſprynge thereof, and lyke as no vncleanes can make it foule, euen ſoo alſo can no aduerſitie of this worlde take away or ſhorten any Chriſten mans lyfe. For GOD which is the fountayne of all lyfe, dwelleth and lyueth in hys hearte, and dryueth all hurtefull poyſon and mortall ſycknelles farre away from thence, ſo that not only it can not harme him, but be alſo helpeth other people and delyuereth them by his preſence: euen as a lyght that ſhyneth farre aboute it, and as a ſprynge that alwaye flowеth, runneth and maketh the grounde moyſt and fruitfull.

And this is that the Lorde ſayeth in the Goſpell, in the laſt of Marke: The tokens that ſhall folowe theym whyche beleue, are theſe; In my name ſhall they caſt out deuilles, ſpeake with new tounges, dryue awaye ſerpentes; and if they

they drinke any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them: They ſhall laye handes vpon the ſicke, and they ſhall recouer. So is it read alſo in the Actes of the Apoſtles the v. Chapyter, that the ſicke were made whole onlye of Saint Peters ſhadowe. So vtterly muſt vaniſh euery thinge that is contrary and againſt the euerlaſtinge light, and ſprynge of lyfe, where a rightе Chriſten man is, in whom God dwelleth by a true beliefe, and out of whome the holy ghoſt ſhineth and floweth.

Let Sathan then preaſſe in here with all his darkenes, and with al his hurtful infection, yet ſhal ye ſee in beliefe that he can not take nor deſtroye anye Chriſten man therwith, if he continue in faith, & kepe god in his hart: But he ſhalbe ſmitten backe and driuen awaye by force, as the wonderfull workes of Chriſt, and of all Saintes do manifeſtly declare. Therfore it is a great ſhame for a chriſten man to be afraid for the plage of the peſtilence as to flye from them whom he is bounde to ſerue by gods commmaundement. For by reaſon he ſhoulde without all feare make haſte vnto them, not onely to fulfil Gods commaundement, but alſo by his preſẽce to helpe them, if their faith do els

worke withal. But if it come not to passe, yet is he sure for asmuch as god dwelleth in him, and he walketh & goeth in Gods commaundement For certainly this promise shall not faile him.

Though a thousande fall at thy syde, and ten thousande at thy right syde, yet shall it not touch thee.

But with faith must these wordes be taken holde vppon, for naturall reason doth not comprehend them, in asmuch as in dede it appeareth farre otherwise. And no man nedeth to thinke nor iudge, that they whiche die of this plage, be all vnchristen and faithlesse: but we ought not to doubte, but that there dye therof many vertuous men, and leaue manye vngodly. Thys is done, because that death may happen to a manne two manner of wayes.

One waye after the commune course of nature according as euery mans death is appoynted hym of God: and we haue consented vnto it in baptysme. Of thys sayth the prophet Job in the. xiiii. Chapter. A manne hath his appointed time, the numbre of hys monethes standeth with thee: thou hast appoynted hym his bounds

boundes, which he ſhall not ouerpaſſe.

Another way maye death happen to a manne before the tyme, by reaſon of his greate and greuous ſinnes: As the lorde hath threatned by Moſes, that if his commaundement be not kept, he wyll cauſe peſtylence to reygne. Whereoute it is certayne, that whan they be kepte, the plagus abydeth out. Lykewyſe ſayeth he in the commaundementes: Honour father and mother that thou mayeſt lyue longe. &c. Oute of the whiche it is certayne, that hys lyfe whyche doth theym not, ſhalbe ſhortened. In lyke maner ſayeth Dauid in the lv. Pſalme. The bloudthirſty ſhall not bryng their life to the halfe numbre. Whereout it is ſure that they ſhoulde lyue muche longer, yf they ſhedde not innocent bloud. Lykewyſe ſayth Chryſt. Luce. xii. Yf ye doe not repent, ye ſhall all peryſhe, as they that the tower in Siloa fell vppon. Where by it is certayne, that who ſo repenteth not, may loke for al miſfortune.

And of thys vntymelye death onelye ſpeaketh thys Pſalme, and promyſeth the faithful Chriſten men, that they ſhal be free from it. For from the ryght appoynted death into the whiche wee haue con-

consented in baptisme, we can not shalbe delyuered. Wherfore if a vertuous right christen man die of this plague, it is certainelye his verye houre appointed vnto hym of God, which he can not preuent. But doutlesse there dye of it many synners also besyde, whyche myghte well liue longer if they repented. And though some be taken because of theyr synnes, yet be they not therefore damned: but if they are forgeuenesse of synnes and beleue, they shalbe saued. As Paule saith: When we be iudged, we are chastened of the lorde, that we shoulde not be condemned with the worlde.

Thus goeth it then together, that iuste menne dye theyr owne right death, but the wycked dye an vntymely death, & therwyth doth god punysh the worlde forest of all because of theyr synnes, but spareth hys owne for theyr faythes sake. Therefore shoulde they not be fearefull nor faintharted, but as the prophete sayeth) they should loke and beholde, howe the vngodly are recompensed: For whether the wycked dye before the tyme, or the iust in the right season, yet is it done both for the punishmente and plague of the vngodly. If vertuous fathers and

mothers

mothers dye frome wicked diſobediente
chyldren, then be the children plaged, for
they are afterwarde euil nurtered hang-
ed or ſlaine. Yf yonge children dye from
wicked fathers and mothers, then be the
chyldren deliuered, and the fathers and
mothers punished, in that they haue ga-
thered theyr goodes for thoſe that they
wyſhe them not vnto. If tyrauntes dye,
then be they punished, and the perſecu-
ted Chriſten deliuered. Yf good rulers
dye, whyche with their wyſdome haue
maintained peace and good gouernance,
then be they in peace: And ſo the vngod-
ly which are left alyue, rayſe vp war and
ſedicion, and be alwaye punished worſe
and worſe. Shortely who ſo hath eyes of
fayth, ſeeth that true beleuers dye in a
ryght ſeaſon but the vngodlye before the
tyme. Wherefore whether good men
dye or lyue, it is done for their welthe.
But whether the wycked dye or lyue, it
is done for theyr punishment, and alway
es ſhall they be plagued, and theyr wyc-
kedneſſe ſhalbe rewarded them.

Wherefore my moſt dearely beloued,
take ye ſuch doctrine and comfort to hart
and folow the ſame. Flye in good ear-
neſſe) by true repentaunce and amend-

ment)

ment) from synne where with the worlde hath deserued this horrible plague: And flye by a true vpright faith vnto Goddes worde wherin is the fountayne of lyfe, and the light of men: Then shall ye be whole and safe from this and other plagues, and so liue to the honour of god and wealth of your neighbour, till the appointed tyme come wherein God the father (in the death of Thryst that we be baptised in) shall sende for vs out of thys myserable lyfe to his owne euerlasting kyngdome: Which God graunt vnto vs all.

Amen.

(*.*)

¶ Translated by. M. C. out of hye Almayne. Anno. 1537.

f Miles Coverdale.

¶ How we Wyfe, chyldren, and other frendes shalbe comforted the husband being dead.

SEyng nowe that God hath called your husband, father or other good frende out of this miserye into euerlasting ioy, therfore shal ye receaue it willyngly: for it is his worke. Repyne not therfore at hys worke, neither wepe agaynst his wyll, but commit the cause vnto him: take it of his hand as a fatherly prouing: and saye with Job: God hath geuen vs him and hath taken hym againe, the name of the Lord be blessed: as it was the lordes will, so is it happened.

God almightye will prouе you as he dyd Job howe ye will behaue your selfe as he taketh out of your syght the thinges that ye loue. He wyll admitte well ynoughe that ye be sorye. For it is seldome sene but a man (be he neuer so vile or of so litle reputacion) hath euer a sundrye gyfte wherewith he serued and profyted other. And the same gyftes were not greatly regarded in a man whyle he liued

lyued : for we regarde litle commonlye such thynges as are present, but as sone as the man is gone, so soone as the vessel is spilte, than beginne we to wante the gyftes that were conteyned therin.

Wherefore is it no marvayle that we be sorye for suche a gifte of God, yf it be taken out of our syght.

As longe as we vse men and the gyftes according as they be ordeyned of god for our necessity, than do we well, and that can God suffre well ynough: But that we mysuse them and make an ydoll of them, that can not God suffre. For whan we put our trust and comforte in man, or anye other creature, than doe we wronge and mysuse the same and the curse cometh vpon vs wherof it is writtē Jeremy. xvii. Cursed is the man that putteth his trust in man.

For all mannes helpe is to be suffered onelye whan they be presente and that we haue nede of them: but as soone as they are gone, than muste we loke for other helpe, namelye: God lettinge go it that passeth away thinking it to be temporall, faydinge at the twinklinge of an eye, and vanitye that is in thys worlde. We haue here no abydinge thinge, but

muste

muſt looke about for the thinge to come that endureth for euer.

For this cauſe doth God draw and pul vs ſo from the creatures. And ſeyng he is our true father, and bridegrome and huſband he can not (for he is ſtrong and gelous) abyde that we ſet our hope, loue or truſt vpon anye creature. This is the cauſe then that he doth take vs frō them and carieth vs vpon him ſelfe. For looke on what creature we haue moſte hope, loue and affection, that wil he ſoneſt take out of our ſight: if he doth loue vs. And when he hath ſuch gelouſy vpon vs, then doth he moſt chiefelye declare his loue towarde vs.

By this alſo it commeth that Chryſte Math. xviii. forbideth vs to cal any man father vpon earth, for we haue onely one father in heauen, namely God which wil nor can ſuffer vs to call or to haue anye man vpon earth father: that becauſe we ſhould depend and hange only vpon him looking for al good of him. For he wil be the ſame that we may hardelye truſt vnto: ſeing he can not nor wil faile vs, and that becauſe he is no earthly but an heauenly father. For this cauſe then is that man bleſſed and happye, that putteth his truſt,

trust, hope and confidence in the Lorde, as the prophet sayeth.

Finally if whan nature fulfylleth her course, man hath but continuall trauaile and miserye, and after that this course of nature is ended & at rest, man is eased of so great trauaile: we seme to hate rather thā to loue them that be departed, if we wold wyshe them to be in this wretched worlde againe. Moreouer in makinge so muche of our frendes departed, and setting so great affection vpon thē, wishing gods worke not to be fulfilled vpō them, we blame God in his will & working: as though he knewe not better what were best both for them and vs than we.

Let vs therfore set our will in Gods wil, and suffer him to worke at his pleasure. For he knoweth best what is both our frendes and our soules health.

FINIS.

Imprinted at London by Leonarde Askell for Thomas Purfoote dwelling in Powles church yarde, at the signe of the Lucrece.